

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM BY TEACHERS OF HISTORY IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LUSAKA DISTRICT, ZAMBIA

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2223-0386/2019/n22a2>

Yvonne Malambo Kabombwe  
The University of Zambia  
yvonnekmalambo@gmail.com  
Orcid No: 0000-0002-1844-7797

Innocent Mutale Mulenga  
The University of Zambia  
innocent.mulenga@ymail.com  
Orcid No: 0000-0002-2636-3630

## **Abstract**

*The study investigated teachers of History's implementation of the competency-based teaching approaches in the teaching and learning of History in Lusaka district, Zambia. A mixed-methods approach particularly the explanatory sequential design was used in this study. The study focused on schools in Lusaka from the ten zones. The total sample size of this study was 99. A total of 80 teachers participated in this study and 10 of them were interviewed. The participants were randomly and purposively selected. A questionnaire was used to gather information from the teachers. Interview guides were also used to collect data from one Chief Curriculum Specialist, one Subject Curriculum Specialist, 2 Standard Officers, 5 Head-Teachers, 10 Heads of Sections and 20 Teachers. Classroom lesson observations and document analysis were also done. Quantitative data was analysed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and qualitative data was analysed thematically. The findings of the study revealed that 67% of the teachers of History did not understand the concept of the competency-based curriculum or outcome-based curriculum. It was also revealed that teachers of History were not using the competency-based or outcomes-based approaches to a large extent in the teaching and learning of History in the selected secondary schools because they did not have the knowledge and skills of the competency-based approaches. Thus, it was recommended that the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) should strengthen the in-service training and continuous professional development meetings in schools and zones for the competency-based curriculum to be successfully understood and implemented effectively in schools.*

**Keywords:** Competency-Based Curriculum; Teaching; Learning; History and Competences.

## **Introduction**

The study of History in schools still occupies a place in the school curriculum in Africa and across the globe in modern education. Madeley

(1920:10) argued that the key aim of History teaching should be ‘the making of the citizen’. The purpose is to instill a sense of pride; History writing and teaching of a nation’s History contributes to the creation and strengthening of nationalism and national identity. The role of History as a school subject has now evolved to contemporary notions of providing historical awareness and consciousness (Lee, 2011; Lee & Ashby, 2000; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Seixas, 2006; 2012). Governments often use History as a tool for legitimization (Lévesque, 2008; Taylor, 2006, Chia, 2012). Thus, History education has been harnessed to furthering national goals. To that end, Harris and Ormond (2018) have argued that it is important for governments to be clear on what type of historical knowledge should be promoted in order develop a knowledge economy in a global context.

Zambia has had two major curriculum reforms from the inception of formal education by the various missionary groups. The first curriculum which Zambia was using was a Knowledge-based curriculum. Wangeleja (2010) contended that a knowledge-based curriculum (KBC) focuses on the grasp of knowledge and thus the curriculum is content-driven. The Tanzania Institute of Education (2004:1) pointed out that “a knowledge-based curriculum emphasizes on the theoretical content and is rooted in traditional teaching and learning approaches”. Hence it can be noted that it focused on rote memorization and acquisition of factual knowledge.

In 2013, the Zambian school curriculum was revised. The education system adopted a competency-based curriculum (CBC) which is an outcomes-based education (OBE) type (Curriculum Development Center, 2013). Like in other countries, the curriculum was reformed in a bid to prepare learners for future challenges in the rapidly changing global world (CDC, 2013). The competency-based curriculum specifically, adopted the UNESCO educational quality framework as part of the Standards and Evaluation Guidelines and commitment to the provision of quality education (ZANEC, 2017).

According to UNESCO (2017), a *competency-based curriculum* is a *curriculum* that emphasizes what learners are expected to do rather than mainly focusing on what they are expected to know. It implies that learners should acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to solve situations they encounter in everyday life and across the globe. Moshia (2012) also pointed out that a competency-based curriculum contains the specific outcome of statements that show the competencies

to be attained. Furthermore, Fitzpatrick (1991:18) elaborated that an outcomes-based education type focuses on “what learners should know at the end of their schooling career, what learners must be able to do, and what do learners need to feel or believe?” Consequently, a competency-based curriculum capitalizes on competency-based learning which focuses on understanding the concepts, skills and attitudes which in turn calls for changes in teaching, learning and assessment approaches (Woods, 2008; World Bank, 2011; Wangeleja, 2010).

Current approaches to teaching and learning of History include historical thinking (Wineburg, 2001) and historical inquiry (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Both approaches emphasize the role of the learner in constructing historical knowledge. This clearly shows that there are some competences that learners can acquire as they study History. It is for that reason that Yilmaz (2008a) argued that the nature of History is characterized as interpretive, tentative, subjective, empirical, literary-based and embedded in a socio-cultural context. These characteristics are consistent with competency-based approaches of teaching and learning which fall under constructivist perspectives of knowledge. The discourses about universal primary education and learner-centred approaches have become popular in Sub-Saharan Africa and have received support from the donor community (Schweisfurth, 2011; O’Sullivan, 2004). While learner-centred approaches are seriously encouraged by its proponents, Schweisfurth (2011) warned that implementing the approaches has mostly failed.

Wheelahan (2007:645) attacked competency-based models of vocational education as being “unproblematic ‘descriptions’ of the skills needed by employers”, and argued that people need to see content as a product of disciplinary thinking. Similarly, McPhail and Rata (2016) critiqued the genericism for focusing on perceived relevance to the “real world” as an organising principle for a curriculum rather than disciplinary concerns. (Betram, 2009) argued the implication is that learners may be assessed on generic comprehension skills rather than on the substantive and procedural knowledge that makes History a specialised discipline. The inherent danger of using an outcomes-based system in the study of History is that the focus on procedural knowledge might overshadow substantive knowledge (Betram, 2009).

Mwanza (2017) observed that teachers are central to achieving universal access to high quality and equitable education for all learners because teachers

have first-hand knowledge of the learning environment, the learners and how the two relate. The competency-based curriculum may appear uncomplicated in design but it is not as easy as it appears, in theory, it requires teachers to be knowledgeable of the key principles of the curriculum and equipped with skills and desirable attitudes to teach using competency-based approaches appropriately (Mulenga & Kabombwe, 2019).

Therefore, it is important for teachers of History to know and understand the kind of curriculum a nation is using in order to interpret it correctly and avoid wastage of educational resources and ensure that necessary skills are attained. Thus, it is important for curriculum designers to provide proper guidelines to teachers so that the curriculum is implemented effectively. Teachers are familiar with the classroom situations therefore might discover the gaps and bring about change and improvements that can help learners achieve the specified outcomes (Mulenga & Mwanza, 2019).

### **Statement of the problem**

Teaching History using competency-based approaches of teaching and learning might help learners acquire competences such as historical skills, historical terminology and concepts (Mazabow, 2003). Although policy documents, teachers and other education stakeholders in the country claim that the *Zambian* education system is now competency-based there is no evidence from research which indicates the extent of the implementation of this new teaching, learning and assessment approach to support those statements. Lack of knowledge of competency-based approaches of teaching and learning by teachers of History might hinder the successful implementing of the competency-based curriculum. It was thus, the intent of this study to investigate the extent to which competency-based teaching approaches have been implemented in *Zambia* by teachers of History. In attending to this main objective, the major research question that guided the study was: what is the level of understanding and implementation of competency-based teaching approaches among teachers of History in secondary schools? This study sought to have the following questions answered.

- To what extent did teachers understand the competency-based curriculum?
- To what extent were teachers using competency-based approaches in the teaching and learning process of History?
- How were teachers assessing learners of History using competency-based approaches?

## **Theoretical framework**

This study was guided by the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) which is based on the belief that all change originates with individuals. It focuses on enabling teachers to adapt the curriculum and to view it as their own. Stages for this model include awareness of innovation, awareness of informational level, concern for self, concern for teaching and concern for learners. In this model, the curriculum is not implemented until teachers' concerns have been adequately addressed (Fuller, 1974). The model has three dimensions for conceptualizing and measuring the change in individuals: Stages of concern, levels of use and innovation configuration. Thus, for the competency-based curriculum initiative to be successful, teachers need to express a level of interest in the initiative's success, use it and modify it. In the next section, a brief literature review that is related to the study was presented.

## **Literature review**

### ***Overview of the History curriculum reform in Zambia***

After independence, Zambia inherited a British education system that was based on western education. The curriculum content was Eurocentric. However, the 1966 Education reforms which were introduced advocated for Africanisation of the curriculum. (Ministry of Education, 1966). Thus, the curriculum content in History was revised and included topics in West and East African History. The government's focus during this period was to change the curriculum to a more Africanised content to support the policy of decolonisation. Later on the curriculum content included topics from Central Africa and Southern Africa. History was taught at Junior secondary (Grade 8 to 9) to senior secondary school level (Grade 10 to 12) (Focus on Learning, 1992).

In 1996, the History syllabus was revised in order to fully localize the high school examination which was formerly set by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate in the United Kingdom (UK). The review of the syllabus was occasioned by the need to improve the quality of education at the high school level as stipulated in the national educational policy document: *Educating our Future-1996* (Curriculum Development Center, 1996). There were two examination papers to be written in History as a subject and each of them was to be written in one hour thirty minutes. Paper One (1) was African History, comprising Part

One on Central African History and Part Two on the History of Southern Africa. The papers consisted of twenty (20) questions. Paper Two (2) conversely was based on World History from 1870.

Essay type of questions was the only type of assessment items. In this case, learners were only required to answer three questions. The examination paper was structured as follows; Section “A” was based on European History, West African History was in Section “B”, Central African and Southern African History in Section “C”. West African History was not taught but examination questions were prepared. Teachers of History were tied to using the traditional mode of delivery, with little or no innovation (Adeyinka, 1989, 1990; Boadu, Awuah, Ababio, and Eduaquah, 2014). Learners were given notes so that they could master the facts. Therefore, learners were only required to recall the teachers’ notes.

The 2013 competency-based curriculum for Senior Secondary History syllabus for Zambia aims at enabling learners to apply historical knowledge, skills and values to the understanding of historical events; evaluate sources of historical information to determine their authenticity; empowering learners with skills to write reasoned essays on some historical topics; assist learners to evaluate current social, political, economic and cultural challenges with a view to offering possible solutions in Zambia, and Southern Africa. It also seeks to help learners to appreciate and understand the state and development of the modern world social, economic and political order from 1870 to the present time. The key competences for learners to achieve are to write essays on selected topics perform elementary historical research from primary and secondary sources and evaluate sources of historical information to determine their validity (History Syllabus, 2013). Therefore, it can be noted that there is a need to shift the teaching and learning of History because teachers need to know the competences that learners should acquire and focus on ways in which teachers can help learners to cultivate those competences.

At Junior Secondary School the History syllabus was integrated into social studies. Integrated Social Science aims at developing an understanding of the economic, political, civic, cultural, geographical and historical factors which influence social development; create an understanding of relationships between man and the environment, develop skills needed to read and interpret maps, charts and diagrams, create an understanding about why and how we learn about the past and develop an understanding

of political development and governance in Zambia since 1964 (History Syllabus, 2013).

The key competences for Junior Secondary School are to show understanding of human rights by participating in human rights activities in school and community, understanding of civic education by participating in gender advocacy in school, state understanding of civic education by participating in anti-corruption activities in the community, demonstrate knowledge, skills of directions by guiding other people and measure distance and interpret relief features in the local environment (History Syllabus, 2013).

The teaching methodologies recommended are learner- centered. These include activity learning (individual/pair/group), educational visits (visits to various relevant institutions and organizations), role-play, debate, demonstration, question and answer technique and teacher exposition. It is expected that learners will be assessed periodically to determine whether the intended outcomes have been internalised and competences mastered. For the sake of this, teachers are advised to conduct continuous assessments, whether weekly, fortnightly or monthly. A mid-term assessment would also be ideal so that where deficiencies are observed some remedial measures are put in place. However, it is strongly recommended that an end-of-term assessment be conducted at each grade level (History Syllabus, 2013).

### ***Expected competences using a competency-based curriculum***

Mazabow (2003) has outlined five expected outcomes that learners should acquire when teaching History using a competency-based curriculum. There is a shift from a theory of instruction focused on the teacher to one more focused on the learner (Betram, 2009). The first outcome is the acquisition of historical concepts. Learners should know the key historical concepts such as time, change and causation. The second outcome is that learners of History are expected to achieve the construction of historical knowledge and understanding. The third outcome that a learner of History is expected to acquire is the application of historical skills. The fourth outcome is the ability to evaluate and use evidence is yet another competence that learners of History should acquire in the teaching and learning process. Finally, learners should acquire civic competences and democratic values. A major purpose of historical studies is to raise “good citizens”, a value which has been considerably modified during the past few decades (Mazabow, 2003). Hence, it can be argued that for the competency-based curriculum to be

successfully implemented teachers need to know the competences that learners should acquire.

History practitioners commonly regard historical knowledge to be differentiated into two main forms substantive and disciplinary knowledge. Harris and Ormond (2018) have argued that central to the curriculum reforms in both contexts are questions about knowledge, and the type of knowledge is deemed to be valuable and useful. For example, in a knowledge economy the ability to 'learn how to learn' is deemed crucial. Substantive knowledge refers to knowledge of events, ideas and people and includes substantive first-order concepts such as nationalism or communism which enable connections to be made across different historical periods and places. Disciplinary knowledge includes procedural and conceptual dimensions. Procedural thinking involves the processes required to effectively work with evidence, develop interpretations and construct arguments. This focus on procedural knowledge, of learning how to know History, fits well with an outcomes-based system (Harris & Ormond, 2018).

### ***Role of the teacher in curriculum implementation***

Moodley (2013) noted that in educational change, a teacher's role is central and change theories which ignore the personal domain are bound to miss its objectives. Similarly, Smith (2001) stated that the role of teachers can no longer be overlooked, for policy changes would not have the desired effect if they were not accompanied by a supportive process intended to strengthen the role of teachers. Zheng and Borg (2014) argued that teachers need to follow a guideline provided by the curriculum developers that suit the competency-based approaches. On the other hand, Ivowi (2004) noted that to ensure that the curriculum is effectively implemented, infrastructural facilities, equipment, tools and materials must be provided in adequate quantities. For the competency-based approaches to be successful, teachers should be knowledgeable enough to let their learners get involved in the learning process since teachers are major players in curriculum implementation (Botha & Reddy, 2011; Wangeleja, 2010). Teachers also need to have expertise in their particular subjects in order for them to yield targeted products (Moodley, 2013).

Mwanza (2017) contended that teachers are the end-users and when they are not aware of the objectives of a curriculum, it may not be possible for a curriculum to be successfully implemented. Thus, it is crucial for teachers



to know the theoretical underpinning of a curriculum in order to interpret it accurately. In addition, Mwanza (2017) argued that curriculum developers should familiarize themselves with the issues faced by the end-users of the curriculum so that they can create relevant solutions as they revise the curriculum. In agreement with this argument, Okech and Asiachi (1992) added their views and suggested that teachers need to interpret the curriculum correctly to the learners for it to be successful. Hence, teachers' knowledge of the competency-based curriculum for successful implementation of a curriculum is paramount in the implementation stage of the competency-based curriculum. In the next segment, the methodology that was employed in this study has been presented.

## **Methodology**

This study employed a mixed-methods research approach that allowed the researchers to collect analyze and interpret both quantitative and qualitative data sets in a single study. The implementation of the competency-based curriculum by teachers of History was investigated using an explanatory sequential design. An explanatory sequential design, according to Clark and Creswell (2011), consists of first collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem; more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection is needed to refine, extend or explain the general picture.

## ***Research sample and data analysis***

The study focused on schools in Lusaka. The total sample size of this study was 99. Participants included 1 Curriculum Specialist, 1 Subject Specialist of History, 80 Teachers, 20 schools, 5 Zonal Head Teachers from the ten (10) zones, 5 Heads of sections from 10 zones and 2 Standards Officers. The participants were purposively then randomly selected. The random sampling method enabled the researcher to have a detailed sampling frame for selected clusters for the entire target area. In an effort to give each teacher an equal chance of participating in the study, simple random sampling was employed by selecting four (4) teachers per school who participated in the study and stratified sampling to ensure adequate gender representation. A questionnaire was used to gather information from the teachers. Interviews guides were also used to collect data from one Chief

Curriculum Specialist, one Subject Curriculum Specialist, two Standard Officers, five Head-Teachers, ten Heads of Sections and ten Teachers. Those who were interviewed were selected with the hope of providing rich information regarding the topic of this study Classroom lesson observations and document analysis were used to cross-check teachers' responses from the questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data was analysed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and qualitative data was analysed thematically. In the next section, the researcher presented and discussed the findings of the study.

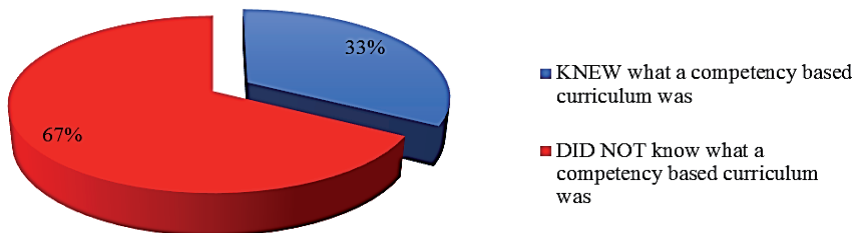
## Results and discussion

The information that was obtained from participants through interviews and questionnaires were combined and discussed in a sequence according to themes that emerged from them. The sections that follow have the results and their discussions.

### *Teacher's knowledge of the competency-based curriculum*

In order for the 2013 revised curriculum to be successfully implemented, a teacher of History should know what a competency-based curriculum is. The key focus in a competency-based curriculum is competences or outcomes rather than knowledge. Therefore, in this study participants were asked to state whether they knew what a competency-based curriculum was. In eliciting this information, the researcher was guided by the teachers' questionnaire. Most of the respondents (67%) indicated that they did not know what a competency-based curriculum was. While (33%) of the respondents indicated that they knew the competency-based curriculum. The summary on teachers of History knowledge of the competency-based curriculum has been provided in Image 1.

**Image 1: Percentage distribution of teachers' knowledge of the concept of the competency-based curriculum**



In order to have in-depth information on the teachers' knowledge of the competency-based curriculum, the researcher used an interview guide to establish teachers' knowledge of the 2013 revised curriculum. Most of the teachers indicated that they did not know what a competency-based curriculum was. For example, one of the respondents, explained that:

*I did not know the principle behind the revised curriculum, all that I know is that the structure for examinations for History papers has changed it now incorporates pictures, short word answers and map reading.*

Another respondent also added that:

*I do not know the concept of the competency-based curriculum because I did not receive any in-service training. The school sends representatives to go for these in-service workshops but when they come back they do not share the knowledge with other teachers they just brief the Head Teacher.*

In responding to the same question, another teacher stated that:

*Am aware that the curriculum has been revised it is two pathways academic and vocational pathway. But I do not have much information on it as we sent the guidance and counselling teacher for training thus, she is the best person who knows about the competency-based curriculum.*

Regarding the same issue, some teachers explained that they had an idea of the competency-based curriculum but there were not sure if it was correct.

One teacher explained that:

*A competency-based curriculum is a curriculum that is learner-centred.*

While teacher (5) five noted that:

*A competency-based curriculum means inclusive learning.*

In addition to the (2) two teachers, teacher (6) six explained that:

*A competency-based curriculum intends to prepare learners holistically.*

In a separate interview the same question was asked to two (2) teachers who indicated that they knew what a competency-based curriculum was.

Teacher (1) one stated that:

*A competency-based curriculum is a curriculum that focuses on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes to use in the future in society.*

Regarding the same issue, Teacher (3) three explained that:

*It is a curriculum that focuses on developing skills that are required in society.*

Another Teacher noted that:

*The curriculum focuses on skills. However, the orientation of the curriculum was poorly done. As teachers, we were just given a curriculum and were not guided on how to implement it. We were not even given a sample of the new lesson plan. Teachers had to come up with their own lesson plans, that is why there was a variety of lesson plans in schools.*

Similarly, Standards Officer agreed with the teachers' view by explaining that:

*The orientation that was given to teachers was done using cascade model in zones and clusters, unfortunately, the information handed over to teachers was distorted by Train of Trainers (T.O.T). The other challenge is that the teacher's curriculum implementation guide and syllabuses have not yet been availed to teachers on time as they are still in draft form.*

A Curriculum Specialist confirmed that not all teachers have been trained due to lack of funds from the Ministry of General Education. He explained that:

*It is true some teachers have not been oriented on the revised curriculum or competency-based approaches of teaching. Nevertheless, it is not only teachers, but even some Standard Educational Officers and Educational Administrators also have not yet been oriented on the competency-based approaches. The curriculum was implemented hurriedly and teachers received less training. Teachers need more sensitization and training.*

The findings of this study indicated that most teachers of History were not conversant with what a competency-based curriculum was because only a few teachers were able to point to competences or outcomes as a key focus of the competency-based curriculum. The findings from the standard officers and curriculum specialist also indicate that teachers were not given proper orientation on the competency-based curriculum. The findings of this study suggest that most teachers did not know what a competency-based curriculum was and the quality of the knowledge of the competency-based curriculum was too limited to implement the competency-based curriculum effectively. These findings were similar to what was revealed in the research findings of Eltis and Mowbray (1997), Williamson (2000), Jansen (2009) and Muneja (2015) who argued that most teachers did not know what a competency-based curriculum was and were unable to give a unified definition competency-based curriculum in the United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa and Tanzania. The authors argued that the range of meanings implied a lack of coherence and focus on the communication of the policy on OBE. Teachers in South Africa complained that the language for OBE was too complex and terminologies were too confusing (Williamson, 2000).

The findings of this study are supported by several studies that have been done where some researchers argued that in-service training for teachers on OBE has not been adequately done in most cases (Jansen, 1998; Muneja, 2015; Benjamin, 2014; Chisholm, 2000; Mosha, 2012). Makeleni (2013) argued that one of the formidable challenges to implement OBE was the inadequate orientation, training and development of teachers. This finding is interesting because teachers who are supposed to implement the curriculum were not knowledgeable of the curriculum they were expected to implement in schools. Lack of knowledge of an educational innovation has a twofold impact on the nation and the learners.

Teachers' lack of knowledge of the competency-based curriculum could thwart the educational system efforts in Zambia in its bid to attain national goals and provide quality education. This finding is an impediment to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal four which emphasizes the provision of quality education. The observation that the majority of teachers did not know the objectives of competency-based curriculum seemed to be a challenge, considering that teachers are the cornerstone in the implementation of any educational initiative (Komba & Mwandanji, 2015).

### ***Teacher's application of competency-based approaches***

Teaching methods in the classroom provide information on how teachers are applying a curriculum. In this regard, the researcher decided to find out how teachers of History were implementing the curriculum using a questionnaire.

Results from Table 1 show that teachers were not using competency-based approaches of teaching and learning. The results were suggesting that the teachers were still using teacher-centered methods thus implementing a content-based curriculum. This could have been as a result of teachers not being given in-service training for competency-based approaches for teaching and learning. In a competency-based curriculum, there is a shift in teaching methods from traditional methods of teaching to learner-centered approaches.

Teacher's responses in the questionnaires indicated that they did not use competency approaches in the teaching and learning of History. Using the interview guide, the researcher also sought to find out how teachers were teaching competency-based approaches. This was done through an interview guide in the interview schedule for teachers.

**Table 1: Frequency and percentages distribution of teaching and learning approaches used by teachers**

Approach		Very Often	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Not Used	Total Response
Teacher Exposition	f	34	29	10	2	5	80
	%	43	36	13	3	6	100
Project	f	2	8	22	37	11	80
	%	3	10	27	46	14	100
Group Work	f	26	26	21	1	6	80
	%	33	33	26	1	7	100
Question and Answer	f	54	16	7	0	3	80
	%	67	20	9	0	4	100
Discussion	f	33	27	9	5	6	80
	%	41	34	11	6	8	100
Debate	f	2	9	31	27	11	80
	%	3	11	39	34	14	100
Drama	f	1	6	23	38	13	81
	%	1	7	29	47	16	100
Role Play	f	5	8	18	38	11	80
	%	6	10	23	47	14	100
Field Trip	f	5	2	11	49	13	80
	%	6	3	14	61	16	100
Problem Solving	f	21	24	9	18	8	80
	%	26	30	11	23	10	100

On the contrary, when asked in a separate interview on what kind of teaching methods they were using in order to implement the competency teachers indicated that they were using learner-centred approaches in teaching and learning. For instance, one teacher explained that:

*I use group work, drama, discussion, role play, pictures and maps while teaching History.*

A similar view was shared by another teacher who confirmed that:

*We use learner-centred approaches now in the teaching and learning of History.*

Ten (10) classes were observed from the classroom selected from the ten zones. From all the 10 observations, it was noted that teachers of History were using competency/ outcomes-based approaches to some extent. The prominent methods of teaching were group work, discussions, question and

answer method and teacher exposition. While most teachers indicated that they were using the learner-centred method in reality from the classes that were observed drama, debate and role play were not used in the teaching and learning of History.

A study of teachers files' which contained lesson plans, syllabi schemes of work and assessment items revealed that some teachers were not using competency/outcomes-based approaches in the teaching and learning of History. Teachers were using different types of lesson plans. Some teachers were still using lesson plans that are stating behavioural objectives while others were using lesson plans that state learning outcomes. Thus there was no uniformity among teachers of History on the type of lesson plan that they used in implementing the competency-based curriculum. Some teachers were still using the old syllabus.

These findings are supported by several studies that have been done where researchers have argued that the curriculum is still content driven (Moshia, 2012; Kimaryo, 2011; Kafyulilo, 2012; Benjamin, 2014). For example, Benjamin (2014) indicated that (80%) of the teachers who were surveyed from selected schools never took the trouble to use the competency-based approaches during the teaching/ learning process in Tanzania. Teachers argued that using a competency-based approach was time-consuming to practice in relation to the content coverage hence they always opted for a teacher-centred approach regardless of the understanding of the learners. Similarly, findings in Kafyulilo (2012) contended that teachers were continuing to use the normal lecture methods even after having been trained about the competency-based approaches. They gave varied opinions on what was understood to be effective teaching. Views also differed on the preparation of lessons, assessing, recording and reporting students' progress. Thus, the implication is that a competency-based curriculum was not being implemented because teachers were not using competency-based approaches in teaching and learning. From the discussion, it can be argued that teachers were still implementing a content-based curriculum instead of a competency-based curriculum.

### **Methods of assessment used by teachers**

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. Assessment can help education evaluators to assess the extent to which an innovation is being implemented The Teachers' Curriculum Implementation Guide (TCIG) for the Zambian Competency-based curriculum states that learners

can be either oral or written, depending on the task. Feedback can be provided by the teacher. However, feedback can also be provided by peers or by the learner her/himself (TCIG, 2013). Despite guidelines from the TCIG, most teachers indicated that they were using the traditional method of assessment in the teaching and learning of History. About 63% of the respondents indicated that they used class exercises very often as a method of assessment while 60% of the respondents indicated that they used tests and examinations as the usual methods of assessment. Teachers were using the traditional paper and pencil or pens assessment methods commonly used in schools for assessing students' competences which encouraged learners to memorize their lecture notes which were deemed crucial for passing the examination. These often tested ability to recall memorized facts, knowledge and principles. A summary of the assessment methods used are indicated in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of assessment methods**

Methods of Assessment		Very Often	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Not Used	Total Response
Interviews	f	3	10	13	38	16	80
	%	4	13	16	48	20	100
Conference	f	1	5	7	45	22	80
	%	1	6	9	56	28	100
Assessing Products	f	14	11	10	23	22	80
	%	18	14	13	29	28	100
Oral work	f	32	25	3	9	11	80
	%	40	31	4	11	14	100
Performance	f	18	22	7	14	19	80
	%	23	28	9	18	24	100
Class Exercises	f	50	19	2	3	6	80
	%	63	24	3	4	8	100
Homework	f	0	24	45	5	6	80
	%	0	30	56	6	8	100
Test and Examination	f	48	24	2	1	5	80
	%	60	30	3	1	6	100

A competency-based curriculum uses authentic assessment methods such as portfolios, classroom or field observation, projects, oral presentations, self-assessment, interviews and peer-assessment (Kitta & Tilya, 2010). Authentic assessment methods are more useful for a competency-



based curriculum than other forms of assessment because they provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate the competencies they have mastered in real life or an analogous situation. This does not mean that the traditional methods of assessment are not relevant as they are part of the competency-based assessment methods. Assessment items from document study showed that teachers of History were still using content-based methods of assessments namely; tests and examinations only. Teachers of History were giving learners continuous assessment such as middle term tests but they are not added towards the final examination. In some schools, learners were given projects but they were not added to the final part of the examination mark. Therefore, it can be noted that teachers of History were still using traditional methods of assessment instead of competency-based methods of assessment that required a teacher to come up with a portfolio.

The findings of this study correlate with the works of Msonde (2011), Benjamin (2014) and Muneja (2015) whose overall findings indicated that teachers still preferred tests and examinations because they were stipulated in the school regulations such that teachers were strictly enforced by the school administration and teachers administered monthly tests and examination per school term. None of the teachers produced portfolios, project work or written essays which promote creative and critical thinking. Jonassen (2008) argued that in constructivist teaching, the assessment was based not only on tests, but also on observation of the learners, the learner's work, and the learners' points of view. It is important that teachers use tradition and competency-based assessments for learners to develop the required competences in History.

One of the disadvantages of OBE is that there is a lack of clarity on the assessment practices to be followed. Moreover in places where there was an assessment scheme in place teachers appeared to be unable to cope with it (Brand, 1998). Jansen (1998) argued further that without intensive debates about the reorganization of the assessment system, traditional examinations will reinforce the curriculum status quo.

Therefore, the study findings indicated that the assessment methods that teachers of History were using were not competency-based assessment. It seems teachers did not know the competency-based approaches of assessment and they were not even provided in the syllabi for them to follow. Thus, there were no competency-based assessments items in their teaching files. In a case where teachers knew the assessment methods, it

could be argued that the reason why teachers were probably not giving competency-based assessments to learners could be that they did not count towards the final mark in the examination.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

There is a serious need for teachers of History to be equipped with knowledge of the competency-based curriculum for the curriculum to be implemented effectively in schools. Teachers should be the focus in any curriculum reform as they play a critical role in the effective implementation of the curriculum. It can be concluded that most teachers of History in Lusaka did know what a competency-based curriculum was and would need proper training for them to have knowledge of the competency-based curriculum. The study also found out that most teachers of History were not using competency-based approaches in the teaching and learning of History. Teachers were still using traditional methods of teaching and assessment. Traditional methods of assessment are not in line with competency-based approaches of teaching and learning. Teachers did not have portfolios for learners to indicate the competencies their learners should have or had acquired. The assessments were not performance-based assessment. In view of the results of this study and conclusions that were drawn, the study recommended among other things that teachers of History should receive in-service training on competency-based approaches of teaching and learning. There would be need to apply the Concerns-based adoption model (CBAM) to enable teachers to adapt the curriculum and to view it as their own. This can help teachers to be aware of the innovation, information needed to implement the curriculum and the needs of the learners. If well applied, the model can help in the successful implementation of the competency-based curriculum in the teaching and learning of History. The challenges of limited knowledge in the implementation of the competency-based curriculum could be avoided. Thus, it is crucial for teachers to know the theoretical underpinning of a curriculum in order to interpret it accurately.

### **References**

- Adeyinka, AA 1989. Current problems of History teaching in some Nigerian Senior Secondary Schools. *Ilorin Journal of Education*, 9(6):55-63.
- Barton, K and Levstik, L 2004. *Teaching History for the common good*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Benjamin LS 2014. *The implementation of constructivist approach in competency-based curriculum: A case of Geography teaching in selected Secondary Schools in Songea municipality*. MEd, The Open University of Tanzania.
- Bertram, C 2009. Procedural and substantive knowledge: Some implications of an outcomes-based History curriculum in South Africa. *Southern African Review of Education*, 15(1): 45-62.
- Boadu, G, Awuah, M Ababio, AM and Eduaquah, S 2014. An examination of the use of technology in the teaching of History: A study of selected Senior High Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 8(1):187-214.
- Botha, M and Reddy, C 2011. In-service teachers' perspectives of pre-service teachers' knowledge domain in Science. *South Africa Journal of Education*, 2(31):257-274.
- Chia, YT 2012. History education for nation building and state formation: The case of Singapore. *Citizenship Teaching & Learning*, 7(2):191-207.
- Creswell, JW and Plano Clark, VL 2011. *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage Publications, Los Angeles.
- Eltis, K and Mowbray B 1997. Focusing on learning in New South Wales. In: J Lokan (ed.), *Describing learning implementation of curriculum profiles in Australian schools 1986-1996*.
- Harris, R and Ormond, B 2018. *Historical knowledge in a knowledge economy – What types of knowledge matter?* *Educational Review*, 71(5):564-580.
- IBE-UNESCO 2017. The why, what and how of competency-based curriculum reforms: The Kenyan experience. Current and critical issues in curriculum, learning and assessment. *In Progress Reflection*, 11.
- Jansen, JD 1998. Curriculum reform in South Africa: A critical analysis of outcomes-based education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 28(3):321-331.
- Jonassen, DH 2008. Educational instructions. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 3(51):49-73.
- Kafyulilo, A, Rugambuka, I and Moses, I 2012. The implementation of competency-based teaching approaches in Tanzania: The case of pre-service teachers at Morogoro teacher training college. *Universal Journal of Education and General Studies*, 4(2):311-326.

- Kimaryo, LA 2011. *Integrating environmental education in Primary School education in Tanzania: Teachers' perceptions and teaching practices*. Helsinki: Abo Akademi University Press.
- Kitta, S, and Tilya, FN 2010. The status of learner-centred learning and assessment. In: Tanzania in the context of the competence-based curriculum. *Papers in Education and Development*, 29:77-91.
- Komba, SC and Mwandanji M 2015. Reflections on the implementation of competence-based curriculum in Tanzanian Secondary Schools. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 4(2):73-80.
- Lee, P and Ashby, R 2000. Progressions in historical understanding among students ages 7-14. In: P Stearns, P Seixas & S Wineburg (eds.), *Knowing teaching & learning history: National and international perspectives*. New York: New York University Press.
- Lee, P 2011. History of education and historical literacy. In: I Davies (ed.), *Debates in History teaching*. London: Routledge.
- Lévesque, S 2008. *Thinking historically: Educating students for the twenty-first century*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Madeley, HM 1920. *History as a school of citizenship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mazabow, G 2003. *The development of historical consciousness in the teaching of History in South African schools*. PhD Thesis, University of South Africa.
- McPhail, G and Rata, E 2016. Comparing curriculum types: 'Powerful Knowledge' and '21st Century Learning'. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 51:53-68.
- Ministry of Education 1992. Focus on learning. Lusaka: MoE.
- Ministry of Education 1996. Educating our future. Lusaka: MoE.
- Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational training and Early Childhood education 2013. *Grade 10-12 History Syllabus*. Curriculum Development Center: Lusaka.
- Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational training and Early Childhood education 2013. *Grade 8-9, Social Studies Syllabus*. Curriculum Development Center: Lusaka.
- Ministry of General Education 2013b. *Teachers Curriculum Implementation Guide*. Lusaka: Curriculum Development Center.

- Mokhaba, MB 2005. *Outcomes-based education in South Africa since 1994: Policy objectives and implementation complexities*. Phd thesis. University of Pretoria.
- Moodley, V 2013. In-service teacher education: Asking questions for higher order thinking. *South Africa Journal of Education*, 33(2):1-18.
- Msonde, C 2011. *Enhancing teachers competencies on learner-centered approach in Tanzania*. MEd dissertation. University of Dar es Salaam.
- Mulenga, IM and Mwanza, C 2019. Teacher's voices crying in the school wilderness: Involvement of Secondary School teachers in curriculum development in Zambia. *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching*, 8(1):32-39.
- Mulenga, IM and Kabombwe, MY 2019. Understanding a competency-based curriculum and education: The Zambian perspective. *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology*, 3(1):106-134.
- Muneja MS 2015. *Secondary School teachers' implementation of the competency-based curriculum in the Arusha Region, Tanzania*. MEd dissertation, University of South Africa.
- Mwanza, C 2017. *Teacher involvement in curriculum development in Zambia: A role analysis of selected Secondary School teachers in Lusaka Urban*. MEd dissertation, University of Zambia.
- O'Sullivan, M 2004. The reconceptualisation of learner-centred approaches: A Namibian case study. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 24:585-602.
- Okechi, JG and Asiachi, AJ 1992. *Curriculum development for schools*. Nairobi: Educational Research Publications Ltd.
- Opong, CA 2009. *An evaluation of the teaching and learning of History in Senior High Schools in the central region of Ghana*. M.Phil dissertation, University of Cape Coast.
- Schmidt MJ 2017. The perils of outcomes-based education in fostering South African educational transformation. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 7:368-379.
- Schuh, KL 2004. Learner-centred principles in teacher-centred practices? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20:883-846.
- Schweisfurth, M 2011. Learner-centred education in developing country contexts: From solution to problem? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 31:425-432.

- Seixas, P 2012. Progress, presence and historical consciousness: Confronting past, present and future in postmodern time. *Paedagogica Historica*, 48(6):859-872.
- Seixas, P (ed.) 2006. Introduction. In: P Seixas, (ed.), *Theorizing historical consciousness*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Smit, B 2001. How Primary School teachers experience education policy change in South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*, 19(3):67-84.
- Taasisi ya Elimu 2013. *Maboresho na Mabadiliko ya Mitaala toka 1961 had 2010. [Curriculum Reviews and Changes from 1961 to 2010]*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Institute of Education.
- Taylor, T 2006. Disputed territory: The politics of historical consciousness in Australia. In: P Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing historical consciousness*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- The Zambia National Education Coalition 2017. *Policy brief on the status of education in Zambia report: A special focus on quality of education*. Lusaka: ZANEC.
- Wangeleja, M 2010. *The teaching and learning of competency-based mathematics curriculum: A paper presented at the Annual Seminar of the Mathematical Association of Tanzania at Mazimbu Campus*. Morogoro: Sokoine University of Agriculture.
- Wheelahan, L (2007). How competency-based training locks the working class out of powerful knowledge. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 28:637-651.
- Williamson, MC 2000. *A comparative analysis of outcomes-based education in Australia and South Africa*. MEd dissertation, University of South Africa.
- Woods, E 2008. *Tanzania case study*. In UNESCO, *Country profile commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008: Education for all by 2015, Will we make it?* Paris: UNESCO.
- World Bank 2011. A regional exploration of pathways toward harmonization of Mathematics and Science curriculum in the East African community. *Discussion Paper*. Washington D.C: World Bank.
- Young, M and Muller, J 2010. Three educational scenarios for the future: Lessons from the sociology of knowledge. *European Journal of Education*, 45(1):11-27.
- Zambia 1966. *Ministry of African Education. Annual Report*. Lusaka: Government Printers.

Zheng, X and Borg, S 2014. Task-based learning and teaching in China: Secondary school teachers”. Beliefs and practices. *Language Teaching Research*, 18(2), 205-221.